



THE

FALCON

I am a Falcon, hooded,
on God's wrist I am lead;
a feathered spume, brought like a wild,
naked feral boy to race the dead
in the white stadia of the moon.

There's no attention like this attention
on the wrist of beauty, gripping the
sly hand, invention
urging the heart to unheard-of-skills.

—Ned O'Gorman, *Adam Before His Mirror*

THE FALCON

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Ginger Loomis

Cover designed by William Batterson

MANSFIELD STATE COLLEGE MANSFIELD, PENNSYLVANIA

STUDENT COUNCIL AWARDS

To

THE FALCON

Poetry Award Winner

Lynda Wilson McCracken

Prose Award Winner

Barbara Kramm

Honorable Mention

Victoria Farr

Charlotte Wilson

John Yuknalis

Dennis Miller

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THE OAK TREE

GINGER LOOMIS

there an old oak tree
stands shapely and true
midst Victorian splendor
and the untried new

some roots have been exposed
where progress dealt its blow
one questions what's happening
will the oak tree have to go

students passing by
peruse the changing scene
and wonder about their future
built on not-so-sturdy dreams

DEFINITIONS

LYN ROYER

moonlight
is a silver ribbon
where the bow of love is tied

stars
are peek-holes for angels
looking through a holy blanket

tragedy
is a dungeon
locked from the inside out

whistling
is a way of talking
to birds

wind
is God
breathing

DEFINITION OF A GENTLEMAN

DOMINICK PANNUNZIO

If a man gives a seat to an elderly lady in a bus, or if he opens a door for a lady in a store, we compliment him by saying that he is a gentleman. This is true in the sense that he did these things, but the same man may go out and ridicule and slander another person or be downright rowdy and unruly. This is by no means living up to the standards of a gentleman; a gentleman acts like a gentleman at all times.

Seldom does a gentleman lose his temper. He does not get violent if angered. He does not shout when discussing something. His dignity is always uppermost in his mind. For once a gentleman loses his dignity, he is no longer a gentleman. Also, a gentleman is kind and warmhearted. He is affectionate to children and animals alike: he never strikes a poor, defenseless dog or loses his temper at a playful little child; he treats every living creature on this earth like he would like to be treated.

Another trait of a gentleman is his ability to be at home with everyone and fit in with all kinds of people. Most important, he can be at home with common, everyday people; he can talk freely with them about their troubles and problems, and can convey his thoughts and opinions at their level of thinking.

Ultimately, a gentleman is determined by other people. A man cannot go around saying that he is a gentleman; he must prove it to people and let them be the judge as to whether or not he is a gentleman. Every man hopes to be a gentleman, but unfortunately only a few make it. A gentleman is an idol of all women and an image for all men to emulate.

"Apathy." Helen could get no further than the first word. The sun was too hot, the band in the rotunda in the middle of the park was playing "America the Beautiful" much too loudly, and leaves from the maple tree under which she was sitting were dropping too frequently upon her shoulders. It was October, but it was so warm that if it hadn't been for the rich reds and golds of the leaves, and the birds overhead flocking together and flying southward, it would have been impossible to believe that it wasn't August.

Helen's philosophy professor had assigned her class a paper either defending or attacking apathy. She knew, or she thought she knew, why apathy was destructive, and had decided to attack it. She had tried to write in the dorm, but it was too noisy to concentrate; she had tried the library, but it was too silent there. She had come to the park hoping to find a place where she could gather together her thoughts and write a decent paper — she just had to get a B in the course! Sitting there on the park bench, however, she couldn't think of a single thing to put in her paper.

"To hell with the damn composition!"

She got up from the bench, crumpled her paper in her hand, and dropped it to the ground as she left the park and headed toward the student union for a cigarette and a cup of coffee.

* * *

Billy couldn't run fast enough to exhaust the energy pent up in his small frame. The day was wonderful! Billy had had a busy day in school; he had made friends with a brand new boy in his class, he had seen a real live chicken burst its shell and come out into the world, and he had even gotten a gold star on his very first spelling paper! Now school was over for the day, and Billy had a whole hour to play in the park before his big brother Joe would come to call him home for supper.

Billy turned his face to the sun, closed his eyes as tight as he could close them, and grinned. He stood still for a moment, and let the warmth of the sun on his face and the strange, wonderful feel-

ing it gave him soak in; he wished he could stand there in the sun for ever and ever! Suddenly he opened his eyes and looked toward the rotunda where the band was rehearsing for the concerts it gave every Sunday afternoon. Billy liked to hear the band play. He wanted to play too when he grew up; he wanted to wear a bright red uniform and play the big bass drum. The band was playing "America the Beautiful" now. Billy had heard that song in school; he even knew some of the words. He wondered if people in other countries had songs quite as beautiful. As he stood there listening, red and gold and purple leaves from branches far above his head detached themselves, slowly and gracefully falling about his feet. Billy shifted his glance toward them, and wondered that it was autumn. He thought about all the fun he would have in the coming winter, and he couldn't help thanking someone — he didn't quite know who — for all the seasons of the year he loved so much. They were all so nice he didn't even know which one he liked best.

As he bent down to reach for one of the pretty leaves, a crumpled piece of white paper caught his eye; he stretched out his little hand and retrieved it. He smoothed out the sheet of paper and tried to read what had been written on it. "Ah-pah-thy — what a queer word." All of a sudden an idea popped into Billy's head and he rushed toward the small pond on the east side of the park as fast as his short little legs would carry him. "I'll bet it's the name of a swell place somewhere!" he thought.

At the edge of the pond stood Paul, the new boy in Billy's class. He was sailing a beautiful red and white sailboat with real sails. He looked up from his boat as he heard Billy approaching him.

"Hey, Shrimp, what are you doing here?"

"I have a boat too, Paul." Billy sat down on the grassy bank of the pond and carefully folded his precious piece of paper into a small sailboat. "See," he said holding up what had been the essay in jest, "can I play too? We could have a race."

"With you, Shrimp, and a paper sailboat—not a chance!" Paul pulled his boat from the water and started to walk away. "Ha, ha! Big deal, a little paper sailboat!"

Billy's eyes smarted with disappointment as he watched Paul walk away. He tried to think of something he might have done to

hurt Paul's feelings, but what would be the use? Then he remembered how today in school, when everyone else had dimes for ice cream cones at noon, Paul didn't have any. He just needed to take it out on someone, that's all. "We'll be friends again tomorrow, though," he thought.

Billy looked at the little boat in his hands and a smile came back to his face. "I don't really need anyone to play with, anyway."

He bent over and gently set his boat in the cool, clean water of the pond.

"Billy! Where are you?" Billy heard the voice of his brother Joe calling him, and he turned to join him.

"Hi, Joe, I've sure had a great time today!"

"Yeah? Well, if we're late for dinner maybe it won't be so great. C'mon slugger!"

The two boys laughed and headed home together. The little paper sailboat swirled around in the water for a few moments, then slowly sank to the bottom of the pond.

IF

ROBERT BOYER

dirty dishes high on the sink
not even a clean glass to get a drink
silverware from breakfast lunch and dinner too
if only if only I hadn't said I do

clothing strewn all over the house
stockings on a door on the table her blouse
panties on the TV slacks upon the floor
maybe I should have thought it over once more

she lies on the sofa reading a book
hair up in curlers wearing a complacent look
no sound except from the Wrigleys she chews
if only if only I hadn't said I do

IF

BARBARA KRAMM

if she had heeded the
 teacher preacher father friend
if she had followed and listened
 not led and said
if she had ignored PLAYBOY
 and devoured LADIES HOME JOURNAL
if she had loved anything
 not hated everything
she might have wed a
 teacher preacher father friend

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HAIKU

ROBERT BOYER

rifle clutched in hand
new-sprung flowers on the ground
the war is undeclared

TWO HAIKU

VICTORIA FARR

my hair a warm brown veil
keeps our secret places
dark and separate

rainbow colors glancing on white lace
setting sunlight shining
through a tear

THREE HAIKU

HELEN FORREST

a robin landed
on an apple blossom tree
winter was over

the sizzling fire
takes pot-shots
at its enchanted gazers

tirelessly he grooms
till his horse is shining
then rides him in the mud

REACTION TO AN "F"

HELEN FORREST

unexpectedly
like stepping off a curbstone
you had known was there

SONNET

ROGER SCOTT

Try to remember if you can,
 When my leaves confetti the ground,
The hopes and passions of springtime man,
 And his dreams that grew brittle and brown.

Look to my branches, forget the skies
 And the grey clouds that shroud the dawn;
Look to my roots where the soldier lies
 Among flowers that now are gone.

His spring is over; summer and fall
 Have passed with unconscious haste.
Don't let his failure to recall
 Be forgotten and turned to waste.

Try to remember, remember you must,
Before my green leaves have turned to dust.

PHARAOH'S DEMISE

CHARLOTTE WILSON

the mighty pharaoh on his deathbed lay
and watched the fading lotus petals fall
secure that in his pyramid so tall
he would be free from such mundane decay
with peaceful heart he closed his eyes that day
entrusting his body to his servant train
released from his despotic reign
the peasant workers watched his proud array
in golden coffin toward the tomb he came
but guardsmen winked and builders of those portals
for twenty years now crushed his fearsome name
and stripped the tomb of unearned jewels and metals
the lotus sensed his loss of worldly fame
and shrined his crumpled body with soft petals

ON RECEIVING A SONNET

VICTORIA FARR

tell me not of roses
roses are too fine
and costly for my blood
tell me of a moon-flower
bathed in liquid light
blooming in the dark
and watered by the tender
tears of virgins and of stars

tell me not of doves
for doves are small and gentle
too sweet for my delight
tell me love of eagles
charging on the wind
children of the sun
bronze wings outstretched
leaping ever upward

SECESSIONIST

HELEN FORREST

a mailbox
paint worn thin
leans
softly against
a picket fence
friends
for long years

yet above
a greying red flag
calls
independence

,

MUSEUM

CHARLOTTE WILSON

the showcase lights buzz
at the silent display
relics uncomfortably
far from home
the public plods along the aisles
passing centuries on a rainy day
as it gazes
an ancient skull glowers back
and the Indian cooking pot
tries to crumble around the charred corn
while near by
a giant beetle stuck on a pin
tries to snap at a nearsighted nose

STREET LAMP

HELEN FORREST

a street lamp
and the moon is dark
a spider web
encircles the moon
a gremlin of a man
stops
smiles
and walks on

CAR HEATER

HELEN FORREST

the car's heater blows
air on us like
bread in a toaster

happiness is quieter than quiet
when all the noises
are your own

gold and youths are easily
molded and scratched
they are scarred for life

heather is what
makes a Scotsman
glad he is

the artist is one who dreams
from the gutter rather
than admit success too cheaply

there are American soldiers
in Viet Nam who know her
sweet clover and blue skies

I have an old tomcat who
could write an Odyssey
about his tattered ears

to have four grandparents and
suddenly one sweeps bitter cold
over a pampered child

a boy and a girl in a storm
were freezing and forlorn
said she *we'll freeze*
said he with ease
why not keep each other warm

OIL FIELD FIRE

(Wellsville, New York, 1957)

WILLIAM BRUNDAGE

on crimson slopes
outlined glaringly
an intensity of
thought
left for the forgotten
 oil storage depots
 (bombed out by
 early morning
 cigarette)
mental metal
sent spinning by explosive
 southern winds
 carrying
 the black blanket
 and shrapnel
 to
 neighboring orchards
fire engines
clanging their way to infinity
 as oil
 runs downtown in a gutter

THREE PLACES

CLAYTON MAGEE

I MSC

sitting in the Hut
drinking cokes and talking
symbols of prosperity all around
good clothes and plenty of food
a man and child just starved in India

II BIEN HOA

a blast of wind through the helicopter door
the penetrating cold of 7,000 feet
the inescapable beauty of Viet Nam below
a sense of beauty pervades my soul
a jet flashes in front and starts his bombing run

III NYC

sounds of soul blast the bar
gyrating dancers spinning through the murk
one man in the lavatory puking
another making an ass of himself
did anyone see the sunset tonight

CYBERNETICS ANTHEM

VICTORIA FARR

we are the
electronic fates
punching out the lives of men
on small neat uniform cards
chopping wives and lovers into tiny squares

we read
record define
classify specify
foretelling the future of man

if anyone
folds spindles or mutilates
we sort him out and eject him
into the circular file

HOPE

JOHN FORSYTE

feeble fly
at winter's warm
window sill

car
on its
back

wheels
still
rolling

you on your last
legs want
out

yet
you
don't

it's frozen
out
there

thus you
spend your last
moments

buzzing
shifting
struggling

to fly
out
free

into warm
outdoor
air

that's no
longer
there

SEVEN WERE WE

HELEN FORREST

in my life
when I was younger
seven were we
seven in number

and we were the largest
in that square
of homes and children
that were there

and though we all
are still alive
now we are six
and sometimes five

HOME FOR HARVEST

DONALD BANKS

Grandpa was so lonely after Grandma died that my parents decided to let him take me back to Ohio with him, as I wasn't yet of school age. I remember going out with him to do the winter vine trimming. He knew just how much of the old vine to cut off to prevent rotting and just how to tie the vines to the stakes. The first snowfall occurred soon after — so pure, so quiet, and so like a large white sheet that seemed to increase the barrier between Grandpa and his wife. At times he would chuckle at the little things I would do or say, but he didn't seem his jolly old self.

Grandpa visited our home in Pennsylvania at regular intervals in the following years. He drove out in the spring and helped us plow the fields, harrow and plant them. He also helped milk the cows and prepare our garden. One thing he especially liked to do in the spring was make maple syrup. I would help him gather buckets of sap from the trees in our woods and carry them to a large metal container held up off the ground by piled stones. He and I would gather sticks and leaves to make a hot fire and boil down the sap. Then in May he would drive back alone to Ohio.

Grandpa always returned in July to help put in the hay, but he never stayed after the middle of August because he had to be back in time for the grape harvest. Even though he was over eighty, he was still a champion grape picker. But in the last two or three years I noticed that he was slowing down.

Last summer Grandpa drove out from Ohio to visit us for the last time, but he made it back in time for harvest.

LATE FOR CHORES

CHARLOTTE WILSON

Five o'clock in the afternoon in early fall usually found eight-year-old Darrell Thomas arriving from the farmhouse across the road to his father's barn where he was given the special chore of feeding the calves. But on this bright fall afternoon he just had to take one short bike ride to the neighbor's pasture after school. He sneaked down the road in back of the farmhouse and pedaled furiously along the narrow secondary road until he caught sight of the brown horse majestically pulling at uneven tufts of grass in the faded green pasture. He leaned his bike against the plank fence and picked fat handfuls of tall grass that grew undisturbed outside the fence. He leaned against the fence and whistled to the horse that nodded forward to take his gift. He stretched his arm between the second and third bar and held his hand very flat so that the gray muzzle wouldn't scoop up a finger with the grass. Darrell stepped on the bottom bar and leaned forward to stroke the horse's cheek.

Why couldn't he have a horse? He wouldn't be afraid of it. He'd take care of it. And he'd ride it every day. But his parents had said that a horse wasn't safe, that besides, they didn't have the money for the upkeep—even if he took a paper route to help pay for it. So on his birthday he had tried to act happy when he saw the blue bike with the red streamers at the ends of the handles as it stood foreignly in the living room. He glanced at it now — a lifeless fusion of pipes and wire wheels leaning against the fence. Then he looked at the big shaggy horse who gently nudged him for more grass. He fed the horse a couple more handfuls, then patted it reluctantly good-by. He led his bicycle to the road, mounted, and galloped away, the mane of streamers flailing in the breeze.

Realizing he was going to be late for chores, he forced his bike into a jittery trot towards the barn as he took a shortcut across a plowed-over field. He headed between two oak trees that were among a grove that edged the highway. Reaching the trees, Darrell felt that he had caught a glimpse of something and should pause, but seeing nothing from his present position, he confidently nosed his bike onto the highway.

Suddenly he saw what had been hidden by the oaks—a screeching flash of grill and headlights. Darrell numbly commanded himself to move, to hurry, but his feet remained limp and motionless on the pedals. He saw the arching silver horse on the front of the car's hood rise.

The other side of the highway and home seemed so far away, and yet he was there — skidding to a stop in a cloud of dust and leaning his bike against the side of the weather-beaten barn. Breathlessly he entered the barn with its sweet-smelling bales of hay stacked against splinter-gray walls. He flew down the pole of spiraling metal steps to the bottom floor of the barn where the smell of hay was replaced with the smell of manure and sour milk. The blue figure of his father was hovering among a line of cows at one end of the barn. Grabbing the milk pail that his father had left for him, he poured the specked milk into the trough for the waiting calves that watched him with large velvet eyes, just like the centers of black-eyed susans bowing along the road to the neighbor's pasture.

It was dinner time and he saw his family sitting around the kitchen table, himself drenching his corn bread in fresh pale butter. He ached to tell them about his trouble, but they were in such a good mood that he didn't want to spoil the warm and happy feeling.

Then he saw his mother sitting before the fire crocheting bright squares for another afghan. The fire in the fieldstone fireplace wavered in twisting colors of orange and yellow more freely than the fields of grass ever could. He looked up into the serenity of his mother's face.

“Mom,” he said.

And the arching silver horse loomed high above the entanglement of boy and bicycle that gave easily under the screeching, distorted wheels.

THE DREAM WALKED ON

HELEN FORREST

the dream walked on
and paused
to think
kittens
snow
diamonds
feathers
leaves
 fly
 down
 ending
in the mud

LITTLE GREEN BOTTLE

PATRICK RITTER

when you think
don't get a headache
the little green bottle
is lost

when you wonder
don't get lost
The Pathfinder
is already written

a good listener
makes a good speaker
but if ears
are kept too clean
mouth may lose
its sex-appeal

DOWN THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

VICTORIA FARR

lemonade sidewalks go up and go down
canary cobblestones cover the ground
hot molten sun from a buttercup sky
drifts as the dandelion clouds sail by

off on a trip down the yellow brick road
dreaming and dancing down trails of gold
off to the city of emeralds and lime
full of the fragrance of mint leaves and thyme

crystalline palaces grass green and cool
metallic fish in the moss-jaded pool
bottle-glass towers with heads in the sky
above olive undulant paving stones lie

off on a trip down the yellow brick road
dreaming and dancing down trails of gold
off to the fields of poppies and rue
with sunsets of orange and diamonds of dew

hot scarlet roses breathe perfume in air
tinged by the pink of the sun's evening glare
dreams of vermillion o'er fields ablaze
in the languorous red of the hot summer days

off on a trip down the yellow brick road
dreaming and dancing down trails of gold
off to a land made of color and light
in a dream-shrouded instant of colorless night

MADRIGAL SQUARE IN FANTASY FAIR

JOHN YUKNALIS

once a year down to the Fair
when the sun is hot and far
to buy a ring some silver things
an old incensed guitar

with recorder in hand we'll walk in the sand
of that moonlit magic land
singing our songs in tambourine time
feasting so sweetly on lime

the fluorescent rain will shower our thoughts
with castles and carrousels
as we gently roam through stream and vale
with a carmine nightingale

we'll tell endless tales of by-gone days
of kings and captured maids
of merry bards and Viking boats
that sailed upon the waves

in an ivory temple we'll chant with beads
to an eerie Indian raga
dreaming away the hot summer day
as we hark to an Arab saga

at sunset we'll stroll to Madrigal Square
wearing flowers in our hair
wishing and praying for the outside world
that's warlike and hungry and swirled

GOOD DEED IN NEW YORK

VICTORIA FARR

as I was walking down the street
a dog before me came
and smiling up into my eyes
it called me by my name

step up it said *and pat me*
for my head is sore and weak
I'm hungry and I need a friend
my life is cold and bleak

I smoothed the dog upon his head
and roughed him on his back
I scratched his ears and rubbed his nose
his spots were brown and black

that's fine he said *and thank you*
I'll see you another time
I cursed him as he left me
for he only tipped a dime

HUNG UP

DENNIS MILLER

One day as I was browsing through some jackets in a store that was going out of business, I came across a little boy hanging up inside a red blazer. I was quite surprised but tried to act nonchalant when I asked him what he was doing in there.

"Just hanging around," he affably answered. I asked him how he came to be there and he told me that his mother had been trying the jackets on him and hung this one up without removing him.

"Well, my God, kid, why didn't you tell her you were in there?" I asked.

"Well, I figured if she was stupid enough to do such a thing, then I was going to act as though I didn't even know her. I don't want people to know that I've got a dumb mother."

"Aren't you scared?"

"Naw, she'll realize what she's done and come back after me. I'm tax-deductible and they don't want to lose me."

"When did she hang you here?"

"Oh, about three weeks ago."

"Aren't you hungry or tired?"

"No, people who come by give me things to eat and the salesmen are very nice. They say 'Good morning' and 'Is there anything I can do for you?' and this jacket is really quite comfortable. I don't know why my mother didn't buy it."

I felt sorry for him, but not wanting to be non-conformist, I gave him a piece of candy, tipped my hat politely, and went on over to the underwear department.

LINES WRITTEN WHILE WEARING ORANGE SUNGLASSES

JOHN YUKNALIS

Man's vehicles
of transportation
pass with their well worn parts——
the dust
rises
and
covers the coalminers' wooden houses: Symbols of a day which
now old
people
wish to think upon.

There is the swing-set child
with
sandbox hands
who
doesn't
hear
his mother's call. She is tired with her
life's
eternal chores;
she cries.

And father comes home from work
to the dirty kitchen table
as his child wades
in a
tiny
swimming pool——
it's so hot! A robin's in the shade while I'm
in the sun.
Swimming tomorrow is fine.
The crabgrass needs cut,
but

My friends aren't really true to
me although I'm
true to
them.

THE RING OF INJUSTICE

BARBARA KRAMM

Characters

WILLIE BURGER, Negro morgue attendant
MISS KRASKA, dispensary supervisor, night shift
SERGEANT McANDREWS, state policeman
SISTER ST. ROBERTS, chief administrator
EDWARD BOSCOV, nephew of the late Solomon Boscov
DR. KEARNEY, intern
MISS KOBLINSKY, student nurse
AMBULANCE DRIVER

Scene: The dispensary of a small Catholic hospital in the South.

Time: The present, the middle of night.

The outside entrance to the dispensary is at stage right. The hospital entrance is a hall, stage left. There is a large desk, covered with the usual papers and desk equipment, facing the outside entrance at an angle. There is also a bookcase and a filing cabinet, both situated near the desk. A few chairs line one wall near the entrance. A curtain divides the office part of the dispensary from the treatment room, which contains an examining table, large overhead light and instrument cabinets. There are also a few chairs, a sink and waste cans.

A nurse is seated at the desk, working over some papers. The wail of a siren can be heard, getting closer. Finally, it stops and the noise of ambulance doors opening and closing can be heard. The nurse looks up just as an ambulance driver wheels in a litter containing a still form.

AMBULANCE DRIVER: Hey, Kraska—we got one for ya. Can't do much for this one, though. Better call the intern. (Wheels the litter into the treatment room as MISS KRASKA picks up the phone.)

MISS KRASKA: Please send Dr. Kearney to the dispensary. (She walks into the treatment room.) How did it happen?

AMBULANCE DRIVER: He was dead when we got there. Looks like he had a heart attack. Only thing is, he was rolling along at about 50 when he hit that pole. Should see the car! (DR. KEARNEY enters the treatment room.)

DR. KEARNEY: Well, what's this? (In an unusually light tone.)

AMBULANCE DRIVER: Looks like a stiff to me, Doc. Better make sure, though. (Doctor examines the body quickly.)

DR. KEARNEY: Yep. Another customer for Willie. (Starts to walk out.) Oh, yeah—Miss Kraska, don't forget to get all the valuables. (Exit DR. KEARNEY with AMBULANCE DRIVER. Enter student nurse.)

MISS KRASKA: Well, let's get busy. (They begin to strip the body, also to go through pockets, etc.)

MISS KOBLINSKY: What'll I do with this wallet?

MISS KRASKA: In the envelope—everything goes in the envelope. Then we seal it, and his relatives pick it up when they identify the body. Go into the office and get one of those big yellow envelopes. (MISS KRASKA picks up the man's hand and slips off a diamond ring. She begins to place it on the pile of belongings, then hesitates, glances around at the door, and slips it into the pocket of her hospital apron, just before MISS KOBLINSKY enters. They finish their task and put all the belongings into the large envelope. WILLIE enters.)

MISS KRASKA: It's about time! What took you so long?

WILLIE: Keep your shirt on. Just be glad *you* don't have to take a trip to the morgue now. He all ready to go?

MISS KRASKA: Yes. And don't forget to report back here after you drop him off. Everything has got to be extra official in these cases. (Exit WILLIE with litter. MISS KRASKA goes

to her desk and sits down. A man enters, twisting his hat, obviously very nervous.)

ED BOSCOV: Excuse me, Nurse . . . I'm Ed Boscov . . . My, uh uncle was brought in a while ago . . . I was just notified. Is this where I pick up his belongings?

MISS KRASKA: Oh, yes, Mr. Boscov. I'll get them for you. (She walks over and gets a large brown envelope containing articles removed from the body.) Look through this and then sign these papers. (BOSCOV takes the envelope, opens it and appears to be looking for one certain object, which he doesn't find.) Does everything seem to be in order?

BOSCOV: No—no there's something missing. (His manner of speaking has changed from nervousness to a demanding, hard tone.)

MISS KRASKA: I'm sure Miss Koblinsky — that's the student nurse — and I put everything we took off your uncle's body in that envelope. We're always very careful about that in cases like this. What are you looking for?

BOSCOV: A diamond ring that my uncle always wore — I've never seen him without it. The police have to be called in — no question about it!

MISS KRASKA: Yes sir. (She is obviously shocked into action. She picks up the phone.) Edna? Get in touch with the police . . . No, I don't have time to tell you . . . thank you. Oh, yes get Sister St. Roberts too. (To BOSCOV) Mr. Boscov, would you have a seat over . . .

BOSCOV: Where's my uncle's body now?

MISS KRASKA: In the morgue. He was taken there shortly before you came in. Now, won't you please sit down until the police get here?

BOSCOV: Who took him to the morgue?

MISS KRASKA: Our morgue attendant. Now, I'm very busy. There is no sense in going over this until the police get here.

(BOSCOV reluctantly takes a seat. WILLIE enters, whistling. To KRASKA.)

WILLIE: Well, there's another one delivered safely. Anything else for me?

MISS KRASKA: Yes. Stick around. The police may want to talk to you.

WILLIE: The police? What do they want with me?

MISS KRASKA: Never mind. Just stick around. (WILLIE enters treatment room, with a thoughtful look on his face. Enter policeman with an official-looking nun.)

SISTER ST. ROBERTS: Miss Kraska, this is Sergeant McAndrews. Now what seems to be the problem? (Before MISS KRASKA has time to answer, MR. BOSCOV has jumped out of his seat and confronts SISTER ST. ROBERTS and the Sergeant.)

BOSCOV: I'll tell you what's the matter — my uncle's diamond ring is missing, and . . .

MISS KRASKA: Please, Mr. Boscov . . . Hello, Sergeant. (She turns to the nun.) Sister, a while ago, a man was brought in — dead on arrival — and the student and I put all his belongings in a sealed envelope, in the usual fashion. Then, Mr. Boscov here — the man's nephew — came in, went through the envelope and found a diamond ring missing.

SERGEANT McANDREWS: Mr. Boscov, are you sure your uncle was wearing this ring tonight? I mean, maybe he left it home — took it off when he took a bath or something. Ever think of that?

BOSCOV: Well . . . uh . . . (A bit less assertive) He could have. I haven't seen him for a while . . . It's possible.

McANDREWS: Well, why don't you go home and look. If you're positive it's not there, call me. I'll be here.

BOSCOV: All right, Sergeant. I'll call you later. (BOSCOV exits.)

McANDREWS: Sister, I'd like to see everyone who was anywhere near the body — a formality, you understand.

SISTER ST. ROBERTS: Miss Kraska, get everyone together in the treatment room here. Is that suitable, Sergeant?

McANDREWS: Yes, I'll speak to everyone there. (Exit nun and MISS KRASKA. Sergeant enters treatment room and finds WILLIE sitting there.) Oh, hello . . . I thought this room was empty.

WILLIE: Miss Kraska told me to stick around. I guess you want to ask me some questions. What's up?

McANDREWS: Exactly what do you do around here?

WILLIE: I take bodies to the morgue, take garbage out, and pick up laundry — odd jobs like that.

McANDREWS: Well, seems there's been some irregularity with that body you took to the morgue earlier tonight. Something may be missing from his belongings — a diamond ring, in fact. Did you happen to see it when you delivered the body?

WILLIE: Nope. Man was as bare as the day he was born. Besides, the nurses are supposed to remove all valuables.

McANDREWS: Yeah, I know. But the ring wasn't in the envelope. You're sure you didn't see it?

WILLIE: Of course I'm sure. No ring on that fellow. (The others enter the room.) Can I go now, officer?

McANDREWS: Yes. I guess you're O.K. for the time being. Don't leave the hospital though. (WILLIE exits. Sergeant speaks to others.) I'd like to talk to you about this missing ring. Did any of you see it on this man's person? (They all shake their heads in a negative answer. He turns to nun.)

Well, Sister, everyone seems to be clean here. I'll bet the old man didn't even have it on! You people can go now. But don't leave the hospital. (The phone rings and MISS KRASKA goes to answer it as the others exit.)

MISS KRASKA: Hello . . . yes . . . are you positive? O.K., I'll get the Sergeant. (McANDREWS picks up the phone.)

McANDREWS: Hello . . . yes . . . O.K., I'll keep in touch with you. (Hangs up the phone. Turns to MISS KRASKA and SISTER ST. ROBERTS.) Seems Mr. Boscov can't find it anywhere. I'd venture to say that it'll be impossible to find it, because there is no proof that the man was wearing the ring at the time of his death. Sister, I'd like to talk to you in your office.

SISTER ST. ROBERTS: Certainly, Sergeant. This way, please. (Exit nun and policeman. MISS KRASKA stretches and takes her apron off, carefully checking her pocket. She places the apron on an instrument cart beside a pile of what appears to be laundry. She then enters the treatment room and begins to pack instruments in towels to be sterilized. WILLIE enters the office part with a large laundry bag and gathers up the large pile. He notices the lone apron, shakes his head and includes that with the pile. WILLIE exits with laundry. Enter SERGEANT McANDREWS and SISTER ST. ROBERTS, talking quietly. MISS KRASKA stops wrapping and comes to meet them.)

SISTER ST. ROBERTS: Miss Kraska, Sergeant McAndrews would like to speak to each of you again. Please get the other personnel involved in this. (Exit MISS KRASKA.)

McANDREWS: I'm very sorry to inconvenience you, Sister, but if anyone took the ring it must have been one of your staff.

SISTER ST. ROBERTS: Sergeant, we are certainly not in the habit of hiring criminals — and to even suspect that a nurse would do something like this is outrageous.

McANDREWS: Well, I must still investigate this possibility thoroughly. (Enter MISS KRASKA with all the others except WILLIE.)

MISS KRASKA: Everyone is here except for Willie. He's in the laundry room and will be here shortly.

McANDREWS: This time I'd like to talk to each of you alone. (He turns to MISS KRASKA.) You may as well be first since you probably have a lot of work to do. (Just then WILLIE enters smiling, as he holds up the ring.)

WILLIE: Hey, look what I found in the lau—

McANDREWS: Well, I guess the questioning won't be necessary. I think we have our man. (WILLIE stares blankly from one to another, then a look of horror comes over his face as the sergeant pulls out his handcuffs.)

WILLIE: It's all a mistake. I didn't take it—I found it in the laun—

McANDREWS: Sure, sure you did, pal. Come on. (He starts to lead WILLIE out.)

WILLIE (babbling as he is led out, his voice getting fainter): I swear I didn't do it—it's all a mistake! (A wailing siren is heard dying away, as the CURTAIN FALLS.)

MUSICIAN

JAMES MORRIS

he asked for
pizza outside
the 5 Spot
weary musician
dark as the
night outside
and feeling
saintlike

patrons
of art nouveau
we grudgingly
gave two
slices
to be turned
into more
restless energy
for
le figaro noir

we left for down
St. Marks
feeling real Boy
Scout
but guilt reached
my soul whenever
pocket coins syn-
copated feet

LINES TO A YOUNG REBEL

JOHN FORSYTE

oh please
do not fire
thy hot breath
at me
Harry

stomp it out
on some
gymnasium's
vast glazed
floor

or sacrifice
fragrant petals
at Tom
dragon's fetid
maw

but patience
forbid thee
to exert thy
insurrection
in my direction

THE ENGLISH TEACHER'S DIAGRAM OF LIFE

PETER KNEISS

underline the subject once
and twice the predicate
that's more important
because
it's not what it is
but what you do about it
that really counts
when
you diagram your life
grammar rules are made
to be broken
creatively
not thrown into nonsense
by complete chaos
but
you've got to live with some sense
or
the language is just
babble
or worse
just
formula repetition

"Bird-brain! Bird-brain!" Danny, staring sightlessly out of the classroom window could still hear the jeers of the other boys. They had surrounded him in the school yard during recess. They had danced around him, imitating his stiff-backed posture and calling him the name he hated.

"Well, Danny?" Danny looked up to see his teacher, Miss Roberts, looking at him.

"Huh?" he croaked, his throat dry and stiff.

"The answer, Danny, to the question on the board."

Danny looked at the blackboard at the front of the room. There were chalk marks on it—wiggly, dancing chalk marks. He tried to read them but they danced away from him, their meanings hidden in their wild gyrations.

Finally he gasped, "I don't know."

"Danny Byrd, you are undoubtedly the most scatter-brained boy I've ever seen," said Miss Roberts, shaking her head. From across the room came a jeer, just loud enough to be heard by all. "You mean bird-brained."

Miss Roberts turned sharply and immediately located the culprit by his flushed face and the sneer on his lips.

"Stephen," she called sharply, "that was unkind and uncalled-for! Stand up and come here."

Steve Hilton rose from his desk; his heavy round face, like a ball of unbaked bread dough peppered with cinnamon drops of freckles, still wore a confident sneer. He snickered knowingly to his friends. Here was a chance to prove himself, to prove that he could take any punishment she could dish out.

Danny sat clutching the sides of his desk with palsied fingers. He knew what was coming; he knew he couldn't stop it.

Steve arrived at Miss Roberts' desk and looked at her challengingly. "Now," she said, "you will go to Danny's desk, apologize to him and shake hands."

Steve's face was flushed with fury. He was humiliated. His friends were no longer laughing with him, but at him. He glared at Danny.

"No," Danny whispered hoarsely, "he doesn't have to."

"But he does," said Miss Roberts, "because I said so. Steve?"

Steve approached Danny's desk, his eyes glittering with ill-suppressed malice.

"I'm sorry," he said, and held out his large, hard hand to Danny.

Danny, knees weak and stomach knotted, stretched out his small, white hand and saw it enveloped in Steve's huge paw. Turning slightly so that Miss Roberts couldn't see, Steve clamped down so hard that Danny felt the bones of his hand grate together. "I'll get you," whispered Steve, "tonight. After school."

"Now," exclaimed Miss Roberts, "isn't it better to be friends?"

Steve smiled at her, his face suddenly cherubic. "Yes ma'am," he said. He took his seat with just a hint of a swagger in his walk. Danny fell back weakly into his chair.

Adelaide Roberts sighed inwardly, glad that the situation was ended. She hated such scenes. They distracted the children and upset her carefully planned and timed schedule.

"Well," she said brightly, "back to our lesson. What are the major exports of France? Cynthia!"

* * *

"Please," Danny begged. "He means it. Help me!"

Classes had ended and Danny was the only student left in the room.

Miss Roberts looked coldly down into his large, frightened eyes.

"Now I'm sure you're imagining things, Danny. Steve is a perfectly nice boy and so are the others. If you would just make an effort of some kind towards making friends, I'm sure you would have no problems."

"Miss Roberts," Danny pleaded. "Help me!" His thin hands clutched at her sleeve.

Suppressing a shudder, Miss Roberts disengaged the boy's hands and gave him a gentle push towards the door. "You'll have to go, now, Danny," she said. "I have work to do. You have nothing to worry about. Remember, you shook hands."

Danny stared numbly for a second, then turned and with slow steps left the room.

The wind was dry, blowing along the ground and carrying crackling brown leaves and chalky dust with it.

Danny emerged from the building. He shivered in the chill wind, suddenly realizing that he had forgotten his jacket. He glanced up and down the street in the cold, steel-grey of the afternoon light and hoped he would not see them. The street seemed empty, the sidewalks bare. With a slight lifting of spirits Danny stepped out of the shadow of the doorway and turned toward home.

Suddenly from behind he heard a shout. Turning, he saw bearing down upon him Steve and two of his rough and overbearing friends.

"Run!" Danny's mind commanded, "Run, they're coming." His feet seemed too sluggish to obey his racing mind.

"Run, run!" He sped down the slight incline of the street, skipping to avoid broken paving blocks, straining to hear the steps pounding behind him.

"Spread out, we'll head him off!" Steve's voice grated on Danny's ears.

Out of the corners of his eyes Danny could see the other boys drawing even with him, and he tried to speed up the motion of his aching legs. His lungs were expanding convulsively and every breath made a sobbing sound in his throat. His heart was hammering until it shook his whole body with every beat. His eyes were

watering, making the street before him blur and waver as he ran. He could hear the breathing of the boy behind him and felt a hand graze his shoulder in an attempt to grab him.

With a sickening thud Steve slammed into Danny's back, and the two rolled over and over, Steve gripping tightly with legs and arms, and Danny struggling as best he could with Steve's weight pressed down upon him.

They came to rest near the fence bordering the school playground.

Steve sat astride Danny's stomach, holding the boy's straining arms easily with his huge hands.

"Look what I caught," sneered the captor. "I caught a bird-brain. Know what I do with bird-brains?" He spat in Danny's face, and the other two laughed and poked at each other gleefully.

"Off!" gasped Danny, "can't breathe!"

Steve stood up, still clutching Danny by the arms. He jerked the smaller boy to his feet and said, "Let's get him into the playground. You can't see what's going on in there from the street." He laughed and let go Danny's arms, and the three allies began to close in on the quivering boy.

Danny took a step backwards. He knew that once they had him in the playground he would be lost. His eyes ranged frantically from boy to boy. Steve was slapping one fist against the palm of his other hand in anticipation. Danny backed farther and farther until suddenly he felt a rough, splintery board of the playground fence against his back.

THE BARRIER

BARBARA KRAMM

Mr. Murray was unpacking a box of books in the living room when Colin sauntered in.

"Hi, son. Where have you been?"

"Walking along the street, to see what our new neighborhood is like." Colin's round, freckled face was thoughtful as he stooped down to help his father. "I met a boy, the thin one with dark hair who lives at the end of the block. His name is Jimmy Nace—about my age, but he seems different."

"I'm glad you and Jimmy are getting acquainted. While you were out, his mother stopped by to welcome us to the neighborhood. She told us about Jimmy. He's retarded."

"Oh, then that's why he acts so strange."

"It's hard for him to learn to read and write, too, his mother said. But he's a cheerful, friendly boy, isn't he?"

Colin shook his head in an affirmative manner, but he wasn't too sure about Jimmy's friendliness. He thought over the meeting that morning, and the more he thought, the more he realized that Jimmy was not only different on the outside — he was different on the inside too. Colin remembered how he had been walking down the street that morning when a big shaggy dog ran up to him, tail wagging. He had stopped to pet it when a thin voice cried out, "Get away from my dog!". Colin had jumped at the sound of the voice and looked around to see where it came from. He saw a small boy, about his age, walking in a halting, jerking manner toward him. Colin had remembered to put his hand out in greeting, like he had seen his father do, but the boy ignored the outstretched hand, and just stared. Colin introduced himself politely, but the other boy had just blurted his name, grabbed the bewildered dog's collar, and hobbled away.

A week later Colin started school and he looked for Jimmy. He asked some of the other kids where Jimmy was, but they just

laughed and made fun of Colin for even asking about "that spaz kid." He later found out from his mother that Jimmy attended a special school a few blocks away from Colin's.

One afternoon, as Colin and another boy were walking home from school, a stone came flying from the direction of a large bush. A small form could be seen through the branches, and the other boy yelled and ran toward it. Before Colin could stop him, the boy had the unknown assailant on the ground and was about to hit him as Colin recognized Jimmy and shouted, "Don't hit him!"

"Whadaya mean, don't hit him? He almost clobbered us with that stone. We could've been hit in the head or something."

Jimmy stared defiantly at the two boys as Colin answered, "Well, you weren't, so just leave him alone."

"O.K., 'new boy', if you're going to stick up for a creep like him, then forget me," retorted Colin's companion, as he stalked away.

Colin turned to Jimmy and offered to help him get up, but was rudely ignored, as Jimmy struggled to his feet, gave Colin a contemptuous glare and walked unsteadily away. As Colin walked home, he tried to think of a way to win the friendship of this odd boy, who obviously needed a friend, but could think of nothing.

About a week later, as Colin went past Jimmy's home, he saw the shaggy dog across the street. Jimmy called to it and the dog started to cross the street just as a car turned the corner and was immediately on the dog. Colin gave a horrified yell and the driver of the car screeched to a stop about two inches from the terrified dog. As Colin was calming the animal after its brush with death, Jimmy appeared, seemingly out of nowhere. "I-I thank you . . . I saw you . . . you saved my dog," he said in his slow, halting manner.

Colin smiled, "Sure — I guess he won't do that again." As Colin turned to leave, Jimmy called, "Wait, Colin. Would you like to see the train set I just got? It's really neat."

Colin turned around surprised at first, then his face broke into a grin and he realized that the barrier had finally been broken.

FUTILE, MOST FUTILE

ROGER SCOTT

I saw them again this summer
working . . . for the us

White Pawn to Black King Three

little people in musty undergrown factories
breathing yesterday's dust and
watching
hard

for the foreman

Black Rook to White Pawn Two

they work
onetwothreefourfivesixseveneight hours a day
(not counting lunch and coffee breaks)
not wondering why
just

thanking . . . because
today they are living (barely)
loving (badly)
following (blandly)
hoping tomorrow will be a better day
better than what? rings
hollow
ominous
under the overcurrent of harsh sighs and
soft laughter

Check

ABSTRACTION

PETER KNEISS

ah my mind is haunted
the whispering slinking ghosts
penetrate the walls of my cells
and lurk in corners
prowling through the skull

their eerie sounds play havoc
on my here and now
and plague my time
with the thought of no
no to the end of now

they are the snakes
that haunt the tall grass
that seize the mouse
as he scampers through
and swallow him

carefully in and out
breathe slowly
hush the sign to pause
creep a thought by them
pounce they grab the thought

the mind becomes waste land
devoid of thought and care
thoughts are all held captive
slowly turn hair grey
and I am not found

PARALYSIS

CHARLOTTE WILSON

Characters

VIRGINIA, a frail-looking girl in her late teens

VIRGINIA'S MOTHER, a middle-aged woman meticulously dressed

MARTIN, a mousey-looking man in his middle twenties

RICHARD, an athletic-looking boy in his late teens

SCENE: The front room of a Victorian house in a small Pennsylvania town. The walls are covered with faded blue wallpaper. Facing the stage, along the left side wall toward the front, is a light blue door which is the front entrance to the house. In the back left corner there is a dark-wooded corner desk and chair. The back wall has a cream-colored fireplace with a china clock on it. The fireplace is centered slightly to the left, and a blue doorway leading to the dining room is on the extreme right. Along the right wall in the back corner is a dark straight-backed chair. Towards the front of the stage is a series of three windows with a worn, blue tapestry couch in front of them. In front of the couch is a small coffee table with a silver dish on it.

As the curtain rises, MARTIN, wearing a gray suit and a pale yellow vest, sits at the desk with a large ledger open in front of him. He writes a little, scratches his head, leans closely toward the book, flips some pages and examines them.

Enter from the dining room VIRGINIA'S MOTHER wearing a navy blue dress. Her hair is neatly coiffeured. She holds a china cup and saucer. She glances at MARTIN, then stands in front of the coffee table and looks out the window as she sips from the cup.

MARTIN (slamming the ledger shut): Ah. (He turns towards MOTHER.)

MOTHER (turning to face him): Are you finished already?

MARTIN: Yes. Your books balance perfectly.

MOTHER: Oh, that's a relief. (She sips from the cup.) I really appreciate your going over my books for me, Martin. I just don't have a head for figures, and it's such a bother when I have to do it myself.

MARTIN: Oh, that's all right. I'm happy to do it for you. Being a bank clerk, it's no trouble for me. And besides, you've made boarding here so pleasant — well, it's the least I could do.

MOTHER: Why thank you, Martin. I'm glad to hear that. You know, under the circumstances, it's so important to keep the atmosphere just right.

MARTIN (nods): How is Virginia today? I don't believe I've seen her.

MOTHER (looking at the clock): Quarter of two. She should be making an appearance any time now. She's expecting a visitor at two.

MARTIN: A visitor?

MOTHER: Yes. I hope she's up to it. She's been so over-tired ever since the accident.

MARTIN: Oh, my. Being hit by a car must surely knock a lot of life out. How long has it been?

MOTHER: Since about the middle of June.

MARTIN: Will she, will she ever walk again?

MOTHER: Well, the doctor said she should be able to some day. She has feeling in her legs. And the tendons and muscles are mending. But I'm so afraid she's going to over-exert herself. (She speaks in a lower voice.) That's what happened to my —husband. Always doing his own repairs on the house, and on the neighbor's. (She looks out the window.) In fact — such a kind soul — he spent more time working on our neighbor's house than this one. Doctor told him he should slow down — he'd suffered a mild heart attack — nothing to fool around with. But he couldn't take just sitting around —

he'd always been so active. He just kept up the pace — building the hall closet, painting the kitchen, roofing — no thought of what would happen to Virginia and me — until one day — his heart just gave out.

(Enter from the dining room VIRGINIA wearing a full-length pink hostess gown. She wheels herself into the room in a wheelchair. On her lap is a dull blue sweater.)

MOTHER (with gaiety): Oh, hello, dear.

VIRGINIA: Hi. (She wheels herself to the couch and stops, then looks expectantly at them.)

MARTIN: You look very nice today, Virginia.

VIRGINIA: Would you two please help me on the couch? (MOTHER and MARTIN rush over to her, MOTHER putting her cup and saucer on the coffee table. They lift her from the wheelchair to the couch.) Mother, would you please hide that (points to the wheelchair) in the dining room?

MOTHER: Now Virginia, what do you want to do that for?

VIRGINIA: I just want it out of sight.

MOTHER exits into the dining room with the wheelchair.

MARTIN (clasping his hands): Oh Virginia! Guess what!

VIRGINIA: What.

MARTIN: Remember when I predicted that the Crumps Used Steel stock would go up? (VIRGINIA nods with boredom.) Well, it went up! (VIRGINIA nods without enthusiasm.)

MOTHER (entering): Oh really?

MARTIN (excited): Yes! One-eighth of a point. (Proudly) And you know what else went up that I predicted?

MOTHER (interested): What?

MARTIN (matter of factly): Benjamin's Foot Care. I had a hunch that corn lotion the Benjamin Company puts out would catch on.

MOTHER: That's wonderful, Martin. You really have a knack for the stock market. (She looks at the clock and becomes agitated.) Oh! It's almost two. (She looks around the room, then sees the cup and saucer on the coffee table.) Oh, would you take this to the kitchen for me?

MARTIN: Certainly! (He takes the cup and saucer and exits into the dining room.)

MOTHER: Oh, Virginia, he's such a fine young man. Such manners. And he's so devoted to you.

VIRGINIA: Please, Mother. Let's not talk about it.

MOTHER: But Virginia—

VIRGINIA: No! I don't want to hear it.

MOTHER: But Virginia, dear, I don't see where you're in any position to be choosy.

VIRGINIA (quietly): When it comes to something as important as marriage, I see that I have every right to be choosy.

MOTHER: Now Virginia, you're not being very practical. This is a hard world. You don't find people like Martin very often. And—well, Virginia, you're no longer in a position where you can take care of yourself.

VIRGINIA: Yes, I know.

MOTHER: Are you really up to seeing Richard today? When he comes, I can tell him that you aren't feeling well—

VIRGINIA: No, Mother. I must see him.

MOTHER (noticing sweater): Isn't that the sweater you knitted for him?

VIRGINIA (defensively): Yes.

MOTHER: Are you planning to give it to him?

VIRGINIA: Yes. (Quickly) Don't worry, Mother. I'm not weakening. I know I have to break things off completely.

MOTHER: Well, I'm glad to hear that, dear. Would you like me to give you a nice sedative?

VIRGINIA: No. I don't want a sedative.

MARTIN (re-entering with a disorderly pile of newspapers, to VIRGINIA and MOTHER): You know, I've really been studying these stocks. I've even made graphs. (He shuffles through the papers and pulls out a large graph. The doorbell rings. VIRGINIA stiffens as MOTHER heads toward the front door.) Here it is! (MARTIN sticks the graph under VIRGINIA'S nose.) They're moving kind of slowly, but they are going up!

VIRGINIA nods distractedly as MOTHER opens the front door.

MOTHER (musically): Hello Richard. (RICHARD enters wearing a moss green sports coat and brown slacks. MOTHER smiles tightly.) Nice of you to visit us. This is Martin Collier. (MARTIN blinks uneasily.) May I fix you a cup of tea?

RICHARD: No thank you. I can't stay long. I just want to talk to Virginia for a few minutes.

MOTHER (mechanically): Oh, of course. I have things to do in the kitchen. (She exits into the dining room.)

MARTIN (glancing at his papers): Oh, and I must go read. (He exits into the dining room.)

RICHARD: Well, Ginnie—

VIRGINIA: Sit down. (He sits in the straight-backed chair.)

RICHARD: Due to the fact that your mother asked me to come at two o'clock, I have approximately five minutes to talk to you. My plane leaves for Germany today, so one of my friends is picking me up here to drive me to the airport.

VIRGINIA: Oh. Yes. Germany. I remember you writing that your scholarship came through.

RICHARD: Then you *have* been getting my letters.

VIRGINIA: Yes.

RICHARD: Then why haven't I heard from you for the past few months?

VIRGINIA (fingering the sweater): Well, I've been kind of busy.

RICHARD: You've been busy. Three letters a week I got from you, then nothing. I'd say you got busy pretty abruptly, wouldn't you?

VIRGINIA: Yes.

RICHARD: What made you stop writing?

VIRGINIA: Uhhh.

RICHARD: Was it something I said?

VIRGINIA: No, it wasn't anything you said.

RICHARD: Suppose you tell me what's wrong.

VIRGINIA: It's just—it's just me.

RICHARD: What do you mean by that?

VIRGINIA: I mean I'm not the same person you knew at Christmas. I've changed, and things just won't work out now.

(There is a long pause.)

RICHARD: Well, (he rises) I guess you wouldn't be interested in meeting me in Germany, then. Kind of a stupid idea, anyway. Well, good-by, Ginnie. (He walks to the door and pauses.) Oh. Please try to get out in the fresh air once in a while. You look like you're suffocating in here. (He begins to exit.)

VIRGINIA: Oh, Richard. (A car honks.) Oh—

RICHARD: That's my ride, Ginnie. (He nods.) Good-by. (He exits.)

VIRGINIA (moaning): Oh! (She notices the sweater.) Oh, no! (She jumps off the couch and begins hobbling across the room.) Wait! Wait! (She grabs hold of the doorway.) I

have something for you! (A car is heard pulling away. VIRGINIA looks down at her legs, back at the couch, and down at her legs again.) Oh, Richard, wait! (MARTIN enters the room from the dining room. He sees her and rushes toward her.) I can walk!

MARTIN (grabbing her as her knees begin to buckle): Darling! You can walk!

VIRGINIA (struggling to get out of the door): Wait!

MARTIN (struggling to hold her back): Please, Virginia!

MOTHER (enters the room from the dining room): Virginia! (She rushes to her.) You should be more careful of yourself! (She grabs VIRGINIA's arm.) Quick, Martin. Let's get her back to the couch.

VIRGINIA (struggling as they move her to the couch): No! Stop! Catch Richard before he's gone!

MARTIN (forcing her to sit down): Now just calm down. We'll make sure he never bothers you again.

VIRGINIA (trying to push him away): Get away from me! Get Richard!

MOTHER (taking a pill from a container she produces from her pocket): Now here. (She shoves the pill in VIRGINIA'S mouth.) That's a good girl. Now you just relax and you'll forget all about that rotten Richard. You're going to be feeling much, much better in a little while—then you and I and Martin will all have a cup of tea and he'll tell us all about those nice stock quotations he's been studying.

CURTAIN

PRAYER

KAREN CROUTHARMEL

God make me strong
but not too strong
to help those in despair

fill me with truth
but not too much
that I forget to care

THE DEATH BAG

A Modern Prayer

J. D. STEYERS

Oh, Lord, let me not be!
Oh, Disconnect me, Lord!

Give me Jocasta's brooch
To spit and tear my eyes,
To give me an excuse
For being blind:
Shut Darkness Out!

Pierce Thou my eardrums, Lord,
With thunder from Thy Hand,
So that the empty echo
Of my words
Cannot bounce back!

Oh, Lord, send Thou my soul
To Susie Sunday's Camp,
So what was once my pain,
My loneliness,
Be now my Bit!

Above all, wash my brain,
And polish it so bright
That it reflect, and shine,
And mirror-like
Bounce images away!

Oh, Lord, thus would I live,
And so be free from pain
"From womb to tomb," the way
I've heard it said;
But, Lord, how will I know
When I am dead?

TO A NIHILIST

JAMES MORRIS

sunshine cannot be denied
if you've got eyes
or flowers and trees
on city park Sundays

backyards are everywhere
and there's a hole under
the fence where anyone
can crawl through

STRANGE CREATURE MAN

BARBARA KRAMM

man queer creature
builds great works
stores vast knowledge
creates great laws
then destroys all with wars
sleeps in ignorance
and acts human lustfully

truly one must admit
the best one-act comedy going
is this obsession
to think perfect
and live human

ALIENATED SOUL

DONALD BANKS

beneath the stars he walks alone
his heart is cold as cold as stone
he needs someone to comfort him
and save him from the storm within
he looks from God but fears a hell
can he escape this empty shell

He pushed open the heavy glass doors and entered the lobby. It was empty except for himself and his reflections in the full-length mirrors that hung around the walls. God, how funny and friendly it was to be in a room entirely populated with yourself. In his room at the dorm there weren't any mirrors. Here from the walls he met thoroughly fascinating people. He laughed suddenly and nodded to one or two of the images, each of which nodded back. Crossing to the far corner of the lobby, he struck up an animated conversation with another mirror.

A couple entered the lobby. He glanced at them over his shoulder and stopped talking. Pulling his trench coat closely around him, he stood watching them as they laughed. Probably some cheap private joke. Suddenly he wondered if maybe they were laughing at him. People did sometimes, he thought; he had never known why. He turned and looked searchingly at his reflection in the mirror, which was no longer a friend but an accuser. He examined his coat, his hair, his complexion, his shoes. There was nothing wrong that he could see. Shrugging his shoulders, he looked to see if they were still laughing, but the lobby was crowded now and he couldn't spot them. He leaned casually against the wall and lit a cigarette, which made him cough, and pretended that he was waiting for someone.

The doors to the auditorium—heavy doors, upholstered with leather—opened and the people from inside started out with agonizing slowness and made their way through the crowd waiting to go in.

Thank God, he thought as he passed through the doors into the auditorium. He chose a seat at the end of the last row, in the corner. Wriggling out of his coat, he draped it over the seat next to him to give the appearance that someone was sitting there. The clock on the wall behind him read ten minutes to eight. "Ten minutes," he whispered to himself with relief. The theater was getting crowded now; he sat watching the people as they sauntered up and down the aisles looking for seats. There were only two seats left

in his row, and one of them held his coat. That seat is taken, he thought.

"Is that seat taken?" The voice startled him. It was the man from the couple who had laughed; the young lady, wife or whoever she was, hovered behind him. He took his coat off the seat and, without saying anything, folded it across his lap. As the man sat down beside him, he pressed closer to the opposite arm of his seat, setting up a few precious inches of barrier between himself and them.

The lights dimmed. Once. Twice. And then it was dark. Looking up and back, he watched the slender, dusty beam of friendly white light as it filtered through the square hole in the wall, drifted down over the heads of the people and spread itself over the screen. He shivered comfortably in the darkness. He wasn't alone now. The darkness included him with all the others; it enveloped them all, giving them something in common. Now he laughed with the rest and felt that he was one of them.

And then, suddenly, it was all over. The lights came up, and all around him everyone was standing, putting on coats and leaving. He got to his feet, shook out his coat and drew it on. He crossed the lobby with its mirrors, which now reflected a noisy, pushing mob. He shoved through the glass doors and went out, alone, into the garish light of the neon signs.

POOR CONNECTIONS

BARBARA KRAMM

I went to this party that Alice gave for her boyfriend. He's going in the army so Alice gave him this farewell party.

The evening started out all right, but then I got stuck with this fellow Henry, or maybe it was Harry. I'm terrible with names. Anyway, this guy was one of those food faddists. He kept telling me how people poison their systems because of the unrefined food they eat. I couldn't get a word in edgewise even if I wanted to. Finally, I got away from him, but only after I promised at least to try drinking carrot juice. If there's a nut anywhere, sure as anything I'm stuck. I seem to attract them.

After I escaped from old rabbit ears I went into the kitchen to get another Coke. Stanley—that's the guy who's going in the army—had a bottle and was getting loaded. He wanted to make a highball for me but I told him I was laying off the stuff for awhile. Things were just as boring in the kitchen so I went back to the living room. I couldn't understand it. Here I was all alone, while everyone else was having a high old time.

Anyway, I began to get restless. I'm not so hot for parties in the first place. My idea of a party is if I could get just one other person—someone I liked, that is—and have a party; *that* I'd like. But a party that's planned with a whole bunch of people, you just feel obligated to have a good time. You feel you must, even if it kills you.

Sometimes I think there's something wrong with me. I mean it. I should like parties but I don't. I'm peculiar. My mother is always telling me how peculiar I am and how she's disappointed in me and all. Ellie, too. My sister Ellie says I have no direction in life. She says I should be thinking about my future and about what I'm going to do when I'm older. The thing is, I don't know what I want to do.

Anyway, I got to thinking how peculiar I am and how disappointed everyone is in me, and I made a mental vow to change.

But even while I was making this vow I knew I was fooling myself. The trouble is, I don't want to be like anyone else. I've got to be me first, no matter what.

I got very blue right in the middle of the party. It seemed as if I was miles away from everyone. It was so crowded in the apartment you could hardly move, but still I was miles away. And I thought how maybe my whole life I would be miles away from people.

And I thought about this crazy dream I keep having. I go to a house and knock on the door and someone opens it, and when I look inside there is no back to the house, just a front, like a stage prop or something. And the person who opens the door is standing far back, a mile away. And I go to the next house and again the same thing happens. And then I keep running from house to house knocking on doors, and always the person who opens the door is standing a mile away. And then there are no more doors and I have nowhere else to go.

I was getting desperate, what with the crowd and all the racket. I figured I'd get the hell out of there. I looked around for the hostess so I could thank her for inviting me. That's another thing about parties. You always have to say these stupid things when you're leaving, like what a swell time you had, what a swell party it was, and all that jazz. I mean, not every lousy party turns out all right, and not everyone has a good time and all, but still you have to say it.

After I gave Alice this excuse about my terrific headache, and after I thanked her for inviting me, I went to get my coat, which naturally was on the bottom of a pile of coats on the bed.

Before I left I hung around by the door for a minute or two with my coat on, just so I could wave good-by or something if anybody happened to be looking. But everyone was busy so I just left. I didn't have anything to do, so I decided to give Ellie a call. I found a phone booth and dialed her number. It rang for quite a while before Ellie answered, and when she did I could hear the noise of a party going on in the background.

"Hello," Ellie said.

"Ellie?" I said.

"Who is this?"

"It's me—Jennie," I said.

"Jennie? What's the matter?"

"Nothing. I-I just called because"

"Speak up. I can hardly hear you."

"Nothing's the matter. I"

"Listen, I can't hear you. We've got a poor connection. Try to call a bit later. O.K.?"

The line went dead and I finally hung up. It was pretty early, so I decided instead of going straight home I'd take a bus ride. I like riding on buses. Especially if I'm not going anywhere. Anyway, I got on this bus and took a seat right next to a window so I could look out. Next thing I knew I heard the driver yell, "Last stop, lady."

"I must've missed my stop," I said.

"This here bus ain't going out no more. Ya gotta get a connection up the street."

I stepped off the bus and began to walk, wondering whether I'd make that connection.

LAMENT OF THE LOST

DENNIS MILLER

I squint into the evening sun
to see my life my future run
into the cold wet sea of time
with you

you cast a shadow toward the sea
and leave a dark and lonely one with me
last footprints on the sandy shore
are yours

as the sun gives way to infinite black
now alone I find I lack
the will to go on like a man
you're gone

and gazing into the mileless sky
I tell myself I must not cry
for tears are lost like burnt-out stars
at noon

if life were but a timeless thing
and shiny like a silver ring
fate would give me a glorious life
with you

but time stops for none just laughs and goes
into the future and steadily grows
older with the sun and moon
and me

so I turn away into the years
through golden sands and crystal tears
and leave you there on misty shores forever
lost

IN MY ROOM

PATRICK RITTER

I spend a quiet life here
slowly thinking how time and its many
trials affect me and existence
watching the spider make his seventh try at
climbing the wall
looking at the ashes flicker and fall from
my cigarette
also trying to grasp the
meaning of life and love
trying not to think of death because I
don't know what it's all about
amazing how God enters my room
and sits next to me He drops in
from time to time
funny though I
have no altars priests crosses crucifixes
choruses of Sunday faith

my room small dark quiet
though loud bright and big
if I make it
it's where it's all happening and
no one is even here to help me
enjoy it
gee I wonder why no one stops to
realize how special my room is
guitars play drums beat and
horns blow yet above all this is
heard a heart beating out

IN A QUIET FIELD

LYN ROYER

in a quiet field
lovers once stopped to steal
warm kisses in the moonlight
many strolled closely linked
others walked and talked

now there is nothing
but cold bare ground
and ghosts whispering
of days gone by
float on warm rainy nights

ALONE IN THE RAIN

CHARLOTTE WILSON

alone in the rain that
pelts down from blackness
laughter streams by

this useless umbrella
protects from the rain
but not from
the sudden mist of tears

GIRL IN THE GREEN HAT

KATHY EPPLEY

Marcia sat at the table sipping her first cup of coffee and reading the morning paper as she had done every morning for the past twenty years. John glanced across at her through the cloud of smoke that haloed her head, ascending from the cigarette that was dangling out of the corner of her mouth. She looked rather tired, he thought, and the rollers hanging half-in half-out of her hair combined with her ragged old red robe made her appearance even more straggly.

"Did you sleep well last night?" he asked as he poured himself some coffee.

"No, how would you expect me to sleep?"

"Excuse me, I was just trying to make conversation."

"Where did you go last night?"

"I told you before I was going to be late. What's the matter, been having that dream again?"

"Yeah, it's always the same old dream. Everything is so beautiful, the two of you out there on the lake together. The sun is setting, the water is calm and quietly dripping off the oars. She is sitting there opposite you in the boat but I can never see her face because of the big green hat she's wearing."

John, irritated and embarrassed by her persistence, left the table abruptly, and, mumbling something about being on time at the office and having to pick up some things after work, he let the door slam hard behind him.

She sat there feeling ashamed. It hadn't bothered her when she first started having the dream about two months ago. During those past two months she had found it hard to sleep and would lie awake wondering what was going through his mind. She wondered who he came in contact with during the day while she was

pent up in the house. Every time he was late getting home from work her suspicions grew stronger.

Morning passed into afternoon and Marcia absorbed most of her day as usual fidgeting in front of the TV. She never went out any more, telling herself she didn't care what people thought about her appearance, though actually she did; it was something in her mind and feelings she could not fathom.

Early evening and John wasn't home yet. The phone rang. It was John. He said he would have to stay in the city overnight, that he had an unexpected appointment. No, he wouldn't be home till late tomorrow.

For a few moments she just sat stunned, in a state of utter despair. For want of something to do she began wandering about the house and reminiscing through whatever came to hand. Having perused the basement, she headed for the attic, where she discovered many relics of a once happy marriage. After some time in reverie over these objects she dashed over to a huge old wardrobe with a cracked mirror on the door. Just inside, it lay, faded and dusty. She grabbed it in both hands, put it on then searched her reflection in the mirror. As she recalled the time some twenty years before when she had gone to the lake and met John for the first time, tears formed in her eyes.

But the faded mirror was laughing at her horridly, reflecting an aging woman whose eyes were no longer bright and whose cheeks were no longer rosy. Had the years really been so cruel?

Summoning lost courage, she tossed the hat aside and wiped her eyes. She descended from the attic leaving the past behind. She smiled as she wondered where she had put her girdle, what kind of pic John liked best, and how she would dress and fix her hair when he came home for supper tomorrow night.

SOLDIERS

VICTORIA FARR

like snowflakes blowing
over land they'd never seen
they ran
trapped by the wind
and forced to go
where hot bullets
screaming through the air
melted them in pools of muddy water

SOLDIER'S FATE

CLAYTON MAGEE

crumpcrumpCRUMPCRUMP! The sound of mortars and the cry of "incoming" wakes him. Rolling out of canvas cot onto the floor, he starts belly-crawling blindly toward a bunker. White flashes pierce the darkness as the deadly crashes come closer. His body shrinks into the wood floor as the whine of metal rips the air above him. A brilliant light blazes outside the tent; concussion's fist punches his eardrum; hot shrapnel slams into his back. "Oh God, I'm hit!" shrieks out of his mouth to be drowned by another blast. Body and mind separate. It seems to be another man cowering on the floor. Shock prevents any pain. Only muscle, no bone is felt as the man rolls his finger from side to side in the wound. Nothing serious. The mortar rounds boom louder as the anonymous gunners walk the rounds back through the camp. Arms and legs desperately flail as the man crawls to the side of a bunker just outside the tent.

He stands up and rolls over the sandbags down onto a man curled in a tight ball, arms wrapped around his head. Undershorts and skin gleam in the moonlight as he sees three other men. A short pause in the shelling. "Anybody got a handkerchief? Got a cut."

A nervous curse is the only answer. The shelling starts again. Eternities pass as the metal whines overhead and thumps into the bunker. The bodies press closer in a community of misery. Silence.

A sergeant's command, "Get to your goddamn alert posts," forces the men into movement. The four jump out and throw pistol belts and ammo pouches over unbuttoned clothes. Loose shoelaces flop at the ankles as the men run to defense positions.

The wounded man asks another, "Take a look at my back." A glance and he is hustled to a medevac post. For him the night is done. Doctors will patch, stitch, and hospitalize, while other men wait for the enemy who never comes.

LULLABY

VICTORIA FARR

dimly burns the lamp of love
the glare of bombs bursts forth
there's sound of crying in the south
and screaming in the north

the children sleep on beds of straw
with hunger in their eyes
and all around the world tonight
the weary soldier dies

LIFE AND LOVE

DENNIS MILLER

in dark and day I sit and think
pondering life and love
life is love and love is hate
and stars are eyes above

I consider life a harbinger
waiting for a dirge
and love a lust a heartbeat
one stone-cold throbbing urge

THE THOUSAND VOICES

VICTORIA FARR

mine is the choice
to cast my lot on soil enriched and old
strengthened with the lives of other men
or to search uncharted seas and different skies
where none but I have ever been before

I hear the thousand voices calling
I feel the pulling of two ways

NIGHTS LIKE THESE

PETER KNEISS

I like nights like these
because there are no stars
stars are too quiet for this world
they split the view in two
and render a harsh judgment
on the street lights
stars make noise from music
transform the city's hum
into a trespassing sound
but this night is right
without the stars to make
the machines feel guilty

STEPPING THERE ON THIS GENTLE NIGHT

WILLIAM BRUNDAGE

Aphrodite is but a sailor of perfect harbors
and will sit beneath you
 as a dove
to travel in close spirals and
 answer you as
if you are with her
 beside a
 river that speaks to
 you
and she touches
your mind with her perfect body
 as you
 touch golden light
and
it will echo
 as
 a carillon in an empty church
 yet
 it lasts forever

NIGHT PASSES BY

LYNDA WILSON McCracken

just a little part dies each day
a little part as time slips away
funny don't you know
nature caused it to snow
a huge mantle of white
has slipped on as the night
passes by

everyone said to me
it's just no good you see
but you'll get over it
as by the door you calmly sit
and get older
as the winds grow bolder
and the snow showers white
fall silent down as the night
passes by

just a little part dies each day
a little part as time slips away
yes it will be over
as I grow from old to older
and the snow's mantle of white
falls silent down as the night
passes by

CHAINS OF THE SEA

JAMES MORRIS

They were late. John whistled softly to himself as he briskly followed his father down the deserted street that morning in late August. The sun was already rising over the low hills on the far side of the harbor. As they neared the beach, theirs was the only boat that remained along the shore.

"Get the outboard," John's father said in cold, firm tones. He said this silently, but the words rang through John's head in crisp, clear tones as he ran toward the lockers beside the far end of the casino at the end of the beach. The thermos inside John's lunch pail clanged and echoed out into the bay. His father never had to tell him anything twice. John had always responded to his father's commands quickly and with the precision that came of long days out on the bay digging clams, when delay in obeying an order might mean a poorer catch or, in a storm, a capsized boat.

Mr. Janson heaved on the bow of the boat. The tide was lower than he expected, and he heaved against the boat again. It scraped along the gravel at the shore's edge and finally splashed into the water. He pushed the boat out far enough into the water so the bow remained solid and the stern could drift freely. As he walked back up the beach to pick up the baskets and clamming rakes he saw his muscled eighteen-year-old son coming down the beach carrying the outboard. His son's muscles rippled in the light of the early dawn which cast shadows across the ribs of his broad chest. He remembered the first time his son had carried the outboard motor by himself. He hadn't ever told John to take the motor alone, his son had offered to. He remembered being the proudest father on the beach that day. Very few words were exchanged on these cold, crisp mornings, and no words were exchanged on the day John took the motor by himself, but Mr. Janson remembered the glances and smiles he received from the other clammers when John came down the beach toting the engine at his side, straining every muscle and yet trying to carry the load casually like the older clammers. Mr. Janson smiled to himself as John tightened the clamps of the engine onto the stern of the boat. Mr. Janson loaded the last of the baskets and jumped inside the boat.

John leaned hard into the bow of the boat, and as it slid into the bay he waded alongside and then jumped aboard, taking his usual position in the center.

Mr. Janson started the engine, and turning the boat around pointed its nose out into the channel and headed for the clam fields. They were already late and so he turned the engine up to full speed and the boat began its morning dance at a faster rate.

The rising and falling of the boat and the feel of the wind on his chest invigorated John. The repeated angry banging of the waves against the bottom of the boat sent vibrations through his body. Eventually, as the bangings became more rhythmic and the drone of the engine more steady, he was lulled into thought. His thoughts returned to the evening of the day before when, after unloading the day's catch aboard the large company boat where they sold their clams at the end of the day, he arrived home to find a letter waiting. The minute he saw the lettering on the outside of the envelope which read: Cookson College, Cookson, Maine, he became excited and tore the letter open as fast as he could. Inside he read the words:

Dear Mr. Janson,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted under our new partial scholarship program.

The boat jerked suddenly and John was brought back quickly to the boat he was travelling in. It was as though the very sea were teasing and taunting him, telling him he would never be able to leave the sea. John remembered the argument of the night before. That was the first time John had ever argued with his father, but his father said he needed him to help clam and that they didn't have the money to send him to college even with a scholarship. John brought up the fact that he could get a loan, even though he knew full well his father did not agree with loans and felt that a man should pay for things in cash and not be chained by debt to any man. His father added that he was educated enough already, and remained firm. John realized he could not win, and giving up, he went upstairs to his room where he read poetry until he drifted off to sleep. Dylan Thomas was his favorite poet and his poems consoled John somewhat. As sleep slipped its rope around his body and slowly pulled him into dreams, he began hearing again the

laughing of the waves and feeling the rhythmic rocking of the boat. He dreamed of the men's voices singing. His body drifted away to the sounds of singing and the rhythms of man and wave. But the morning brought back the bay, the houses, and the hills the night had spirited away.

John looked up at the sea gulls circling and crying above them as they dug their long rakes into the mud of the channel, searching for cherrystone clams. The morning dragged on with few words exchanged between them. Mr. Janson was taciturn by nature and John preferred the silence to useless talk anyway. It afforded him a good chance to think, even to write poems in his head, which he usually did during lunch, and he would write them down at the end of the day. Lost in his thoughts, John forgot about the events of the evening before. He was content to think and watch the sea gulls and invent strange similes between his orange and the noonday sun.

The catch was good that day. When the company boat came in and counted the bushels of clams, the Jansons were paid seventy dollars, which was the most pay for a day's work they had received all summer. John and his father waited on the shore for the other men to unload their clams aboard the large gray company clamming boat that arrived each evening to count clams and pay the men. After the company boat had pulled out into the harbor and the boats were pulled up on shore and the motors put away, all the men went to the beach casino for drink and conversation.

Mr. Janson had let John come into the casino and have beer with the men that summer. John liked to sit there quietly and listen to the stories the men would swap. Today, however, John put the outboard away, and walked down the beach by himself, and as he sat on an overturned boat thinking and watching the seagulls soar above the hills and into the sun, he heard the sounds of the tide receding.

He then heard the sounds of the men's voices singing inside the casino. Each day the men sang at the end of their gathering. John realized it meant his father would be leaving soon, and he got up and began walking down the beach toward the casino. As the voices became louder and louder John began to whistle the tune. As he stepped inside the door to the casino he smiled, and began to sing with them. Soon his voice blended into the chorus as loudly as the rest.

MORTALITY

KAREN CROUTHARMEL

my dying ember body
does exist
somewhere between
the burning flame of life
and cold ashes
of eternal rest

within me growing
with each advance
death smothers
and yet
implanted deep within
lives a spark
that desires
continued burning

lust for another sunrise

BOUNDLESSNESS

JOHN YUKNALIS

out—
beyond the earth
there is no light
complete—
darkness—
you are—alone—
forever
boundaries that are broken—
scattered
— by the mind
and diminished
the
mind
reaches onward and outward—
toward infinity—
past revolving galaxies
and solar systems into
the
bleakest blackest
of
space
out—onward
there is no silence like that of the
universe—such a silence that even thoughts
are not heard
beyond—eternity
toward no—end
dimensions of time—broken
farther and farther—

JOHN O'HARA: PORTRAYER OF SUPERIOR PEOPLE

BARBARA KRAMM

John O'Hara was born in a small Pennsylvania town and moved on to a big-city culture to become a professional newspaperman and writer; yet as an author he remained fascinated with the places and the people of his boyhood, and he returns to this material consistently in his most important work. O'Hara's region is the south-central portion of Pennsylvania centering around Harrisburg and his own home town of Pottsville (which he converts into the fictional town of Gibbsville). The population of this region is varied: Pennsylvania Dutch farmers, Polish coal miners, Italian shopkeepers and small tradesmen, Irish artisans, upper-middle-class townspeople mainly of Anglo-Saxon extraction, and a sprinkling of professionals (doctors, teachers) from out of the state. It is the last two groups with which O'Hara is chiefly concerned; that is to say he writes from their point of view even though people from the first four groups appear as minor characters. O'Hara belonged to the last group; his father was a doctor who attended both the illiterate miners and the wealthy town gentry. In *The Doctor's Son* O'Hara portrays his own experience as a boy accompanying his father on his professional rounds.

All of O'Hara's major works follow essentially the same pattern: they are fictional biographies of upper-middle-class Pennsylvanians involving a social analysis of a small Pennsylvania city. O'Hara is never content to show us an individual; he must also show us the society which produced the individual. His novels contain much detailed data on the economy and industry of the region, and the changing social conditions which are causing some families to rise and others to decline. His main interest, however, remains centered on character. His typical hero (Julian English, Joseph B. Chapin) is a man born into a superior family in a small town, educated at an Ivy League college, who returns to his home town and

lives a "respectable" life as a leading citizen, concealing from the public the rottenness and unhappiness of his private life. Even though he attacks the hypocrisy and banality of middle-class life, it is obvious that he himself is impressed with the distinction of families like the Chapins with their Cadillacs, their Ivy League educations, their social position, and the general aura of importance which surrounds them. O'Hara's importance lies chiefly in his thorough knowledge of a certain region and its people, and his skill in re-creating them in fictional form for the general reader.

While most authors of fiction seek to interpret life, Ayn Rand stands apart as a writer who views life through her fiction as she would have it be, rather than as it is. In her novels, Miss Rand has been meticulously thorough and careful to create a world completely governed by her concepts of reality and morality. She finds facts, emotions, and historical incidents which fit or support her philosophy, then exaggerates these raw materials into a novel which expresses her values unimpeachably. Through years of writing, Miss Rand has evolved in her essays and novels ethical, sociological, economic, and historical laws to govern life and justify her panacea.

Let one example, her concept of love, show the process. Although love has been the subject of literary treatment since literature began, Miss Rand is probably the first to reduce that concept to a formula by which man or machine can live.

Of the various pleasures that man can offer himself, the greatest is *pride*—the pleasure he takes in his own achievements and in the creation of his own character. The pleasure he takes in the character and achievements of another human being is that of *admiration*. The highest expression of the most intense union of these two responses—pride and admiration—is romantic love. Its celebration is sex. (*The Virtue of Selfishness*)

In *Atlas Shrugged* Miss Rand takes the supremacy of the individual, the virtue of achievement, and the emotions of pride and admiration and melts them into the elusive "love." The protagonist, Dagny Taggart, responds to the Randian formula mechanically, loving three men in succession in response to the increasing degrees of admiration which they elicit from her and she from them.

The obvious problem with this concept of Miss Rand's — and with her works as a whole — is that they are an oversimplification. She has determined that all other pleasures are subservient to these two, pride and admiration, and that they are the only morally proper foundations of love. In her novels she has limited, in the same way, every aspect of life by selecting, expanding, and expelling parts of reality as it suits her purpose. Although each individual aspect is well defended within her fiction, the whole is a patchwork quilt with large holes and unraveling stitching.

SALINGER'S EMOTIONAL ESTRANGEMENT

CHARLOTTE WILSON

Jerome David Salinger emerged from his shroud of oblivion just long enough to drop a handful of literary works into the public's lap. This small gesture has resulted in one of today's most widely read authors.

But for those readers who feel they must know the details of the life of the writer whose works they read, Salinger has proved to be an evasive enigma. For instance, when asked in 1949 by *Harper's* to submit a biographical sketch along with his work, he responded instead with a critique of the affectations of today's writers:

In the first place, if I owned a magazine I would never publish a column full of contributor's biographical notes. I seldom care to know a writer's birthplace, his children's names, his working schedule, the date of his arrest for smuggling guns (the gallant rogue!) during the Irish Rebellion. The writer who tells you these things is also very likely to have his picture taken wearing an open-collared shirt — and he's sure to be looking three-quarter-profile and tragic. He can also be counted on to refer to his wife as a swell gal or a grand person.

He gets his character and personality across to us, rather than facts about his life—and gives editors something to think about.

Secluded at Cornish, New Hampshire, behind a six-and-a-half-foot fence, he remains outside the critics' grasp. Unlike other contemporary authors, he is never seen at literary parties, and he writes no reviews about his or others' works. He even remains noncommittal about his favorite authors:

I'd like to say who my favorite fiction writers are, but I don't see how I can do it without saying why they are. So I won't.

But he obviously has felt the need to express himself about something. He has been regarded as a spokesman for the young

people of America after World War II. In general, Salinger's stories are all variations on the theme of emotional estrangement. Through sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield of *The Catcher in the Rye*, Salinger shows the conflicts of a boy in a man's body as he perceives the differences between the appearances and the submerged motives of what he calls the "phony" world. In *Franny and Zooey*, Franny is going through a religious crisis which her mother tries to assuage with hot chicken soup. Love in Franny and Zooey's world is contained in the theme of emotional estrangement. Zooey knows that in order to survive, he must love even those he calls the "fishy" people — common people like the fat lady for whom Seymore, his older brother, told him to shine his shoes before going on the radio, even though she couldn't see his feet. The fat lady is Christ. This "blanket love"—loving everyone indiscriminately—is actually avoiding commitment. It is simply a variation on the theme of withdrawal and escape.

Franny and Zooey are members of the Glass family, a large family of grown up quiz kids who used to appear on the radio. The members of the Glass family subtly overflow into his other stories. Perhaps this concern for the idea of the family and its relationships is an attempt to frame his theme of, or maybe to compensate for his own, emotional estrangement. Ironically, Mrs. Salinger has filed for a divorce on grounds of lack of communication, leading one to toy with the idea that perhaps his theme has been something that has troubled him personally for some time.

Salinger's immediate appeal to his openminded readers is his almost poetic use of common language. His description dares to show "real" people. These qualities, plus the fact that his writing reveals a deep awareness of the effect of emotional estrangement on contemporary American life, account for the reason he is generally considered, and perhaps will continue to be considered, of more importance than simply a popular writer wrapped in tantalizing enigma.

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THE CONTRIBUTORS

Donald Banks is a freshman biology major from Towanda, Pennsylvania. Don enjoys skating at Troy, reading science fiction, and swimming in a cool mountain stream.

Robert Boyer is a senior from Schuyl Haven, Pennsylvania. He is majoring in English and does his student teaching the spring semester.

William Brundage is a sophomore social science major from Wells-ville, New York.

Karen Croutharmel is a freshman English major from Dalmatia, Pennsylvania. She is interested in stock car racing, travel, hiking, and all types of sports. In high school she was editor of the yearbook. At Mansfield she is a member of the Student Christian Association and the chorus.

Kathy Eppley, a senior from Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, is majoring in English under the liberal arts program. Kathy is interested in modern poetry and drama.

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Helen Forrest, a senior speech and drama major, has her home in Canada. A member of the Players for four years, she is also in Readers Theater, Alpha Psi Omega, and summer stock. Helen has won prizes in forensics affiliated with the Debate Club. Her future plans include post-graduate work and/or work in the professional theater.

John Forsythe, a member of the English department, has had charge of *The Falcon* now for the third year.

Peter Kneiss is a senior English major from Scranton, Pennsylvania. He is a dean's list student at Mansfield, and his plans include graduate study for a Master of Arts degree in literature.

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James Morris, a sophomore English major who grew up in Queens, New York, is residing as of the spring semester at the Environmentalist Workshop in Westfield, Pennsylvania. His activities include poetry, painting and sculpture.

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Charlotte Wilson, a senior English major, is from Towanda, Pennsylvania. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi and Delta Zeta sorority. Her special interests include art, music and poetry.

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